

member of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. The gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS) is now serving his seventh term in the Congress of the United States.

I want to thank the gentleman from Illinois (Speaker HASTERT) and the bipartisan delegation. The gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS) serves in this body and is a Democrat; but he ran as an American, and he was supported by the American delegation, Republicans and Democrats. And I want to thank the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) for his leadership of our delegation, the chairman of the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe Commission here in the Congress.

The gentleman from Illinois (Speaker HASTERT), in his letter supporting the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS), said, "Never one to retreat from a challenge, Alcee Hastings possesses an instinctive ability to identify solutions and build common ground for their implementation."

It was that ability, that quality, that determination that the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS) had which led to his overwhelming election. Gert Weisskirchen, in Germantown, who withdrew in favor of the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS) this week, said to the Palm Beach Post that the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS) represents the best of the United States. Now, Mr. Weisskirchen and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS) have served together for almost a decade in the organization's parliamentary assembly, so his observations are well founded and based upon his experience.

The gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS) will bring credit to our country, credit to our Congress, and credit to the Parliamentary Assembly. I will tell my colleagues that the United States has the privilege next year in July on our July 4 break of hosting the 55 nations that make up the Parliamentary Assembly. I know that all of us look forward to welcoming our colleagues from throughout Europe and Canada, the signatory states, with the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS) as the president of that organization to our Capitol city and showing them American hospitality, while at the same time cementing a relationship with our allies and raising very significant and important issues to international security, peace, and economic well-being.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for this time to honor our colleague, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS), on this historic election as president of the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PAUL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PAUL addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time of the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PAUL).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Indiana?

There was no objection.

OUTRAGEOUS RULING BY THE INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, this is a dark day in the history of international law. Today, the International Court of Justice, at the request of the United Nations General Assembly, ruled, "The construction of the wall being built by Israel, the occupying power in the occupied Palestinian territory, including in and around east Jerusalem and its associated regime, is contrary to international law."

With this extraordinarily biased decision, the International Court of Justice has become an international disgrace. This outrageous ruling confirms what many of us have feared, that opponents of Israel have overtaken the judicial process at the U.N.'s highest judicial court and have begun to use it for political aims on the world stage.

Mr. Speaker, the referral of this issue itself was biased and prejudged Israel. The referral actually used contestable political language such as "occupied Palestinian territory" and referred to the Israeli security fence repeatedly as a wall. It is as if the court simply did a cut and paste of those terms and issued them in their ruling today, completely failing in their multipage ruling to talk about context, namely years of brutal terrorism at the hands of Palestinian extremists against Israeli civilians.

Mr. Speaker, it is crucial today that we make a pair of points that the International Court of Justice completely ignored. Number one, Israel's security fence prevents terrorism; and, number two, the ICJ had no authority to hear this case.

These two points, Mr. Speaker, are actually reflected in a resolution that I authored along with the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. BERKLEY) that has garnered nearly 163 co-sponsors, Republicans and Democrats alike. The Pence-Berkley resolution resolves, in effect, that Congress supports the construction by Israel of a security fence to prevent Palestinian terrorist attacks; and, number two, that Congress condemns the decision by the UN General Assembly to request the Court of Justice to act.

Mr. Speaker, I rise humbly today to say Congress would do well in the coming days to act with all expeditious speed on this legislation, on this reso-

lution, and make a statement that America stands with Israel.

I authored this resolution after my wife, Karen, and I toured Israel in January of this year. Seen in this photograph, we are standing with Israeli defense forces along the side of a chain-linked fence, which the International Court of Justice today repeatedly described as a wall. A chain-linked fence that nevertheless has proven to be an effective tool in thwarting terrorist attacks.

In the north of Israel, where a section of the fence has been completed, there has not been a single suicide attack in more than 8 months. Before the first stage of the fence became operational in July of 2003, the average number of attacks was 8.6 per month. In the past 11 months, that figure has dropped dramatically to only 3.2 attacks per month.

In the 2 hours that we toured the security fence this day in January in Israel, the security officials traveling with us received in my presence three separate calls on their radios about attempted terrorist incursions. In 2 hours, three separate terrorist incursions. These incursions, while they do not succeed but on an intermittent basis, the reality is that the attempts are a daily reality for Israelis. The truth is the Israeli Security Fence has prevented terrorism, and that was a fact completely lost on the International Court of Justice.

Also lost is that under international norms, the Israeli Supreme Court, just like if it was the United States Supreme Court and not the court in the Hague, has sole jurisdiction over this matter. In fact, the Israeli Supreme Court is an independent judiciary of a sovereign and democratic nation. Its rulings on the Israeli Security Fence has struck a fair balance between the rights of Israelis to live free from suicide bombings and the right of Palestinians to their economic well-being, and there is no legal basis for the court in the Hague to usurp its authority.

So I rise today, Mr. Speaker, to urge this Congress to act on House Concurrent Resolution 371 that the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. BERKLEY) and I introduced and enjoys 163 cosponsors and to act deliberately. Or if not on our resolution, that in the next several days to rise with one voice, Democrats and Republicans alike, to condemn this unjust decision by the International Court of Justice.

I also challenge my colleagues, as we think about funding issues and resources that will be spent in the direction of the United Nations, that we seriously reconsider any effort to direct U.S. taxpayer dollars to this international court, if I may say, of injustice.

Like so many million Americans I pray for the peace of Jerusalem and I stand with Israel, believing as those same millions do that He will bless those who bless her, He will curse those who curse her.